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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR APRIL 3-4, 2005

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for April 3-4, 2005. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

RADIKAL: Eric Edelman, the U.S. Ambassador to Ankara, said that the U.S. might provide support or undertake feasibility studies, should Turkey and Iraq agree to open a second gate on their border. Opening a second border gate at a place that opens to a non-Kurdish zone has been on the agenda of Turkey for five years. The Kurdistan Democratic Party, which allegedly has been exacting duties from Turkish trucks at its sole discretion due to lack of a stable Iraqi government, has reportedly strongly opposed this proposal.

YENI SAFAK / HURRIYET / CUMHURIYET: James Inhofe, a Republican Senator, paid a surprise visit to Incirlik Airbase along with U.S. Ambassador Edelman. Meanwhile, Abdullah Gul, Foreign Minister, told AKP MPs on Sunday that the Turkish government would grant permission to the U.S. for more flexible use of the Incirlik Airbase; however, this permission would be within the boundaries of U.N. criteria. In Monday's Cumhuriyet, Gul was quoted as saying that they would soon provide a response to the requests of the U.S.

HURRIYET / CUMHURIYET: During a military operation conducted in Guzeldere district of Bingol, one village guard was killed; another village guard, as well as two soldiers, were wounded. A network of shelters built to survive winter conditions was discovered (note: the report does not say specifically, but implies these shelters were established by terrorists). In addition, 2240 pounds of food, 100 blankets, training suits, medicine, syringes, and ammunition found in the shelters were reportedly destroyed together with the shelters.

CUMHURIYET: The Ministry of Health embarked upon a project to fight malaria in Diyarbakir, Sanliurfa, Batman and Siirt provinces. To control the spread of the disease, the Ministry began using pesticides, starting with the Yucelen village of Siverek district in Sanliurfa.

CUMHURIYET / OZGUR GUNDEM / EVRENSEL: Twenty-seven of the "human shields" from Batman and Istanbul were allegedly arrested as they tried to go to Cay village of Derik district in Mardin, where military operations were being conducted. Twenty-nine of the "human shields" from the Cukurova region were detained as they tried to go to the Cudi Mountain. Some of the volunteers reportedly have obtained medical reports from doctors indicating that they have been exposed to violence.

OZGUR GUNDEM / EVRENSEL: Abdulkadir Aygan, a former PKK member turned JITEM (Jandarma Intelligence Center) officer, had allegedly made confessions regarding murders committed as a JITEM officer to Ozgur Gundem (see press summary of 2/3/05). In the wake of those confessions being reported, the Diyarbakir Prosecutor pressed charges against Aygan on March 29. However, it has been discovered that Aygan was recorded as dead in his civil registry record. The court will solicit information on why the civil registry of the accused lists him as dead.

EKSPRES: Ali Pekmezci, a columnist from Ekspres, wrote: "As far as I can infer from a TV program of Nedim Soylu on Akdeniz Channel...the cold war between Aytac Durak and Abdullah Dogru (Justice and Development Party Provincial Chairperson) seems to be turning into a heated one. Meanwhile, Akdeniz and Cukurova TV are more than willing to host the upcoming war on their channels."

EVRENSEL: GABID, the Association for Southeast - European Union Relations, was founded in Diyarbakir. Sahin Akkaya, GABID's Chairperson, said that the association has more than 100 members and that it is planning to open branches in Ankara, Istanbul and Brussels.

CUMHURIYET: Although the ban on the Kurdish letters "x", "w" and "q" was lifted five months ago, it is reported that nobody in Diyarbakir has given names to their children including these letters to date.

YENI SAFAK / BOLGE: Forty-seven percent of the population in southeastern Turkey is under 15 years of age, according to data provided by the State Statistics Institute. On a nationwide level only 30 percent of the population is under 15.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

11. EKSPRES / HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): Hulusi Kilic, Turkey's consul in Aleppo, Syria, paid a visit to Ali Kavak, Chairperson of the Antakya Chamber of Industry and Commerce. Kilic congratulated Kavak for being re-elected to office. Ambassador Kilic stated that the volume of exports to Syria has doubled compared to figures of four years before.

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